



**REASON & REVELATION**

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# An **INTRODUCTION** to Christian Evidences for **CHRISTIANS**

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**Moses**  
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"Does  
This  
**Offend**  
**You?"**





# An Introduction to Christian Evidences for Christians

Jeff Miller, Ph.D.

Article In Brief... GOD

**Some Christians have argued that the subject of Christian evidences is unnecessary and not worth teaching in churches. Statistics show, however, that if the Lord's Church is to withstand the onslaught of modern naturalism, Christians must be equipped to defend the validity and supremacy of Christianity by highlighting the many evidences that undergird the fundamental pillars of the Christian faith.**

## CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES: THE NEED

**A**CCORDING to church statistician Flavil Yeakley, 40% of the young people in the Lord's Church fall away when they leave home. Of the 40% that leave the Church, half of them join denominations. The other half (20%) become irreligious.<sup>1</sup> About half of the irreligious will become atheists. The typical reasons for their departure from faith are that the young people learned about **evolution** in college; they came to disbelieve in miracles because of being taught **naturalism**; they believe that there is a lack of **evidence** for God and Creation; and they believe that Christianity goes against logic and common sense.<sup>2</sup> So things they learned in science shook their faith in what they had been taught in church and at home. In fact, their faith was more than shaken—it was destroyed. They left the Church.

Is the study of Christian evidences important?

Should it surprise us that so many are leaving the Church for such reasons? Of the children being educated in the United States, 87% of them are in the public school system.<sup>3</sup> The official doctrine that has been taught in public school classrooms over the last several decades is naturalism—the belief that only the natural exists (i.e., no supernatural phenomena such as Creation, the global Flood of Noah, or biblical miracles occurred). Certainly, we encourage our children to respect and learn from their teachers at school, teaching them to view their teachers as authorities in the dissemination of academic knowledge. With naturalistic evolution being pressed on the minds of so many children from a young age, should it surprise us that naturalism is rapidly on the rise in our country and that even

within the Lord's Church our children are being influenced? A 2012 Gallup poll revealed that from 1982 to 2012, the number of naturalists in our country increased from 9% to 15%—the equivalent of roughly 19,000,000 Americans at the time the poll was administered.<sup>4</sup> A Gallup poll from 2017 updated the percentage: 19% of Americans now believe in naturalistic evolution.<sup>5</sup> Roughly one in five Americans have embraced atheistic evolution.

When writing their New Testament books, Paul, Luke, James, Peter, Jude, and John addressed the issues that the Church was facing in their day: the false doctrines affecting the Church, the ever-increasing Roman threat, Judaism in the Church, and other highly relevant issues, including Greek philosophy. If they were writing today, what do you suppose God would inspire them to address? Among other things, would they not spend ample time addressing the rapidly increasing threat being posed by naturalism? One wonders if they would not devote even more time to the subject of Christian evidences than they already did in their writings. One could argue that 70+ years ago, the primary threat being posed to the Church outside of the typical vices was denominationalism. In response, Christians made a concerted effort to ensure that their congregations were well-equipped to defend the truth concerning pure New Testament Christianity. Statistically, denominationalism and its younger sibling, liberalism, are clearly still significant threats to the Church—20% of our young people are leaving the Church and joining denominations. However, 70+ years ago, naturalism was not the threat that it is today. Due to the threat the Church is facing, we would do well to spend as much time studying Christian evidences in the Church as we do denominationalism and

liberalism. If a person's faith in more fundamental concepts has eroded, how will it help to teach him about baptism, the true Bride of Christ, or proper worship? Mark it down: the time is rapidly approaching when the threat of denominationalism will be significantly less of a threat to the Church compared to naturalism. Are we equipped to contend for the faith? Are we "ignorant of [Satan's] devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11)?

I know of members of the Church who see no need to spend much time on the subject of Christian evidences, and by implication, they see no need to be **prepared** to teach others Christian evidences. They reason, "We just need to read and study the Bible! That's it. I didn't need to study Christian evidences, and neither do they. Christian evidences is unnecessary." Merely covering one's eyes so that he cannot see the tornado approaching will not save a person, nor his family, from impending doom. Perhaps for many people it is the case that they do not need to have answers to faith challenges like naturalism—Darwinian evolution and the Big Bang; they do not need to be treated to a survey of the many evidences that support the Christian faith; but according to the statistics, many others do. If 20% of our youth are becoming irreligious, how many of the others would have become irreligious due to the same issues had they not been given answers to the challenges being directed against their faith at school? Thankfully, they had wise parents and/or elders and preachers who gave them the tools and the knowledge they needed to stay grounded in their faith.

With Scripture, humanity certainly has what it needs to know how to live life the way God wants us to—how to live a godly life (2 Peter 1:3). But we are also commanded to be able to defend the truth from false doctrines eroding the faith of the Church (cf.

1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3). We must "test all things; hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). How can we do so without examining the evidences for and against Christianity?

The sufficiency of Scripture also does not mean that we are not encouraged to study other products of God's words and wisdom that He has given us—namely, His creation (often termed, "general revelation"). Several passages speak to that truth, with Romans 1:20 perhaps being the premier passage on the subject. According to Paul, one can study "the things that are made" (i.e., creation) and come to the conclusion that God exists, and even learn about the nature of God from those things. The Bible encourages us to study the great "works of the Lord" (Psalm 111:2), the greatest of which would surely be the Creation of the entire Universe and the destruction of the Earth in the global Flood of Noah. Scripture tells us that we can learn about God by studying astronomy (Genesis 15:5), cosmology (Psalm 19:1), and geology (Job 12:8). In His sermon to Job in Job 38-41, God used the created order repeatedly to teach Job about Himself. Disciplines

covered included physics, oceanography, nomology, optics, meteorology, and biology—including zoology, ornithology, entomology, herpetology, botany, and marine biology.

## CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES: DEFINED

**S**TUDYING Christian evidences is crucial in this day and age if we wish to stand against the naturalistic tide sweeping the country and influencing the youth of our day. A study of Christian evidences is authorized by God. In fact, a study of Christian evidences is mandated by God. And it should be noted that studying Christian evidences is the logical, rational thing to do.

What are "Christian evidences"? Simply put, the discipline of Christian evidences is the study of evidences for Christianity—namely the evidences that substantiate the three "pillars" of Christian faith: the existence of God; the inspiration of the Bible; and the deity of Christ. The importance of evidence cannot be understated. In the field of philosophy, there is a general rule that is followed if a person wishes to be rational: the Law of Rationality. It says that one should only draw those

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conclusions that are warranted by the evidence.<sup>6</sup> Many within Christendom seem unaware that Scripture endorses and commands adherence to the same obvious axiom. “Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). The Bible explicitly prohibits having a “blind” faith (i.e., coming to believe something without adequate evidence). Scripture incessantly makes the point that we should come to a knowledge of the truth **based on the evidence that has been provided to us**. According to Romans 1:20, so much **evidence** has been provided to come to the truth of God’s existence that not to come to the right conclusion is “without excuse.” We can **know the truth**—not merely accept it “on faith”—and it will set us free (John 8:32). As did the “fair-minded” Bereans of Acts 17, God wants us to search for **evidence** that substantiates a claim before blindly believing it (vs. 11). Since many false teachers are in the world, He tells us to “not believe every spirit, but test the spirits” before believing them (1 John 4:1). Unlike fideism (i.e., blind “faith”)—which pits itself against reason<sup>7</sup>—Paul believed in

establishing truth **using reasoning** from the **evidence** (Acts 26:25). In fact, Jesus told His audience **not to believe/have faith in Him** if He did not substantiate His claims with **evidence** (John 10:37). “Doubting Thomas” was not in error for failing to have a blind faith. Rather, he was in error for having been witness to more evidence of the truth than nearly anybody who had ever lived or ever would live, and yet he still disbelieved, requiring even more direct observational evidence than he had already received (John 20:24-29).

The blind “faith” idea is unbiblical. The biblical portrait of faith in God would be more like seeing evidence being “poured” into a “truth container.” The “evidence” rises to the top of the container and begins pouring over the top, establishing the truth of God. Where “faith” comes in is when we look at the truth container, filled to the brim with evidence, and **choose** whether or not to believe it. Most do not and will not (Matthew 7:13-14). It is their own choice, but it is not because God has not provided enough evidence to come to the truth. Rather, they have rejected the evidence which is

readily available, due to their own personal motives.

Biblical faith is not blind, and yet God still expects us to come to the conclusion that He exists, that the Bible was ultimately authored by Him, and that Jesus is His divine Son, in spite of the fact that we cannot directly observe God or directly witness the confirming miracles and signs that Jesus did to authenticate His message. The implication is that God has given us sufficient evidence to be able to **know** these things, and He expects us to dig for and study that evidence. And that is the point of Christian evidences. Famous philosopher from the 1800s, Herbert Spencer, said, “Those who cavalierly reject the Theory of Evolution, as not adequately supported by facts, seem quite to forget that **their own theory is supported by no facts at all.**”<sup>8</sup> If Spencer was correct, then the Christian’s plight would be dire indeed. Fideism has lent credibility to arguments like this one, and rational people rightly reject religion and Christianity in particular when theists promote having an irrational, blind faith. But as the study of Christian evidences has long revealed, Spencer’s comments were without merit and in fact revealed his ignorance of the preponderance of evidence that surrounded him at the very moment he penned those words. With every breath he inhaled and every stroke his pen made, evidence of the Christian faith was entering his body and radiating from it.

One might ask, “How can one come to believe in something invisible—something that he cannot even directly observe or experiment on—and that faith not be blind?” How can we come to know that gravity exists? We cannot see, taste, touch, hear, or smell gravity, and yet we have a mound of evidence that supports its existence. The nature of the evidence is **indirect**, rather than direct, but

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it is evidence none-the-less. Much of science (especially historical sciences like geology, paleontology, cosmology, evolutionary biology, etc.) relies on gathering indirect evidence to come to rational conclusions about what happened, how it happened, when it happened, or why it happened, and many times the event itself was not directly observed. Forensic scientists attest to that basic truth on a daily basis. They enter the scene of a crime and can determine what crime occurred, who committed the crime, when they committed it, how they committed it, and oftentimes even why they did it, without having personally observed the event. Similarly, though God's existence cannot be empirically verified, it can be easily verified indirectly through deductive reasoning from the scientific evidence available to us.

### CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES: AN OUTLINE

As previously mentioned, Christian evidences centers on three pillars at the most basic level: the existence of God, the inspiration of Scripture, and the deity of Christ. Apologetics is generally tied to Christian evidences as well—defending the biblical model that stems from those three fundamental planks. The following general topical outline results:

1. God exists: Although we cannot directly observe God, several lines of evidence exist that lead one to the logical conclusion that He exists. These are generally termed “Classical Arguments.” The typical arguments include the Moral, Cosmological, and Teleological Arguments. The Ontological, Intuition, and Aesthetic Arguments are seen less frequently, though they continue to provide valid evidence for God as well.<sup>9</sup>
  - a. The primary response to the existence of a God argument is made by the naturalists (i.e., atheists, agnostics, and

skeptics). They say the Universe came about solely naturally. The Big Bang Theory and Darwinian evolution are generally invoked to substantiate that claim. So Christian evidences often addresses those subjects.<sup>10</sup>

- b. Others argue that proving that a god exists does not substantiate **which** God exists. This question is answered upon establishing the second fundamental plank of Christian evidences.
2. The Bible is inspired: If the Bible can be shown to have characteristics that humans could not have produced, then it will have provided internal evidence of its divine origin, and subsequently, identification of which God exists. Thus, Christian evidences explores various internal evidences of the Bible's supernatural characteristics: its scientific foreknowledge, perfect unity, its brevity and omissions, its objectivity, its predictive prophecy, and its perfect accuracy (historically, geographically, etc.).<sup>11</sup>
  - a. Skeptics respond that the Bible claims certain events happened which are not plausible and which are not substantiated with geological, paleontological, or archaeological evidences (e.g., the Flood, Babel, wilderness wandering, etc.). Thus, Christian evidences explores such criticisms and responds.
  - b. Others insist that the Bible, whether or not it was originally inspired, has been corrupted in its transmission and translation.<sup>12</sup>
  - c. Still others take issue with the alleged “perfect unity” of Scripture, and cite hundreds of alleged contradictions in Scripture, attempting to prove that the Bible was written by mere humans. After all, “to err

is human,” but “to err” should not be God.<sup>13</sup>

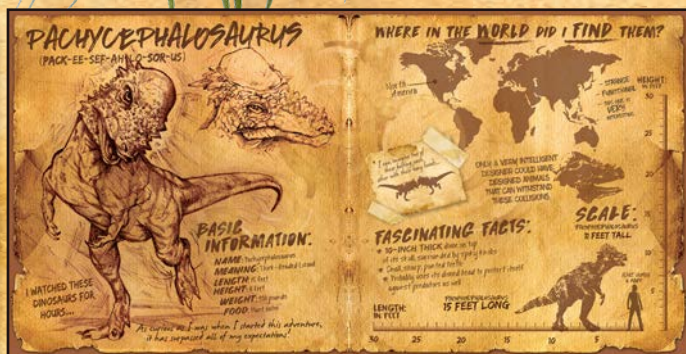
- d. Other skeptics argue that regardless if there is a god, it cannot be the God of the Bible, because the God of the Bible is a walking contradiction. They proceed to highlight events in Scripture which they believe prove Him not to be Who He claims (e.g., God cannot be omnipotent and omnibenevolent and still allow horrendous things to happen to good or innocent people;<sup>14</sup> God allowed slavery, sexism, genocide, etc.).<sup>15</sup>
  - e. Christian evidences, again, explores each of these criticisms to assess their validity and responds.
3. The Deity of Christ: The deity of Christ is a central theme of Scripture that distinguishes Christianity from other alleged “biblical” religions (e.g., Judaism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, and Islam). Since the second plank of Christian evidences has already been established before a discussion of plank three would be relevant, a discussion of the deity of Christ generally centers on the teachings of Scripture on the subject, although some things about Christ have been further verified by ancient testimony from non-Christian and even hostile sources.<sup>16</sup>

If we as Christians are going to obey the command to be ready to give a defense of Christianity (1 Peter 3:15) in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Christian evidences must be studied in each of our congregations and in a regular way. Knowing that 20% of our young people are leaving the Church and becoming irreligious, in large part due to what they perceive to be a lack of evidence for Christianity, should surely cause us to adjust our study and evangelism strategies.



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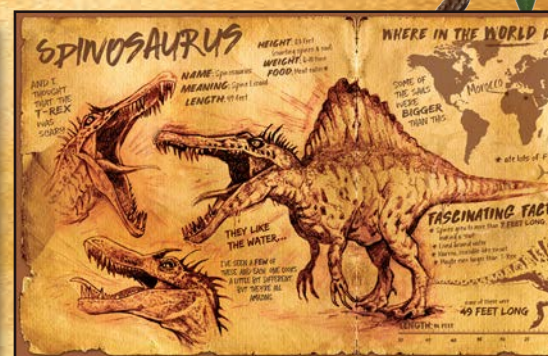
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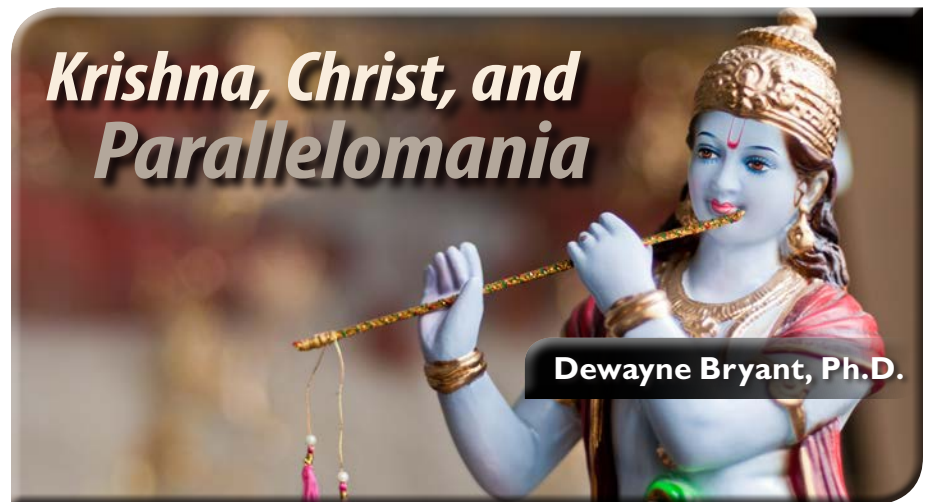
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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Flavil Yeakley (2012), *Why They Left* (Memphis, TN: Gospel Advocate), p. 39.
- <sup>2</sup> Michael Lipka (2016), "Why America's 'Nones' Left Religion Behind," Factank, Pew Research Center, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/08/24/why-americas-nones-left-religion-behind/>.
- <sup>3</sup> "Statistics About Nonpublic Education in the United States" (2016), U.S. Department of Education, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/nonpublic/statistics.html>; "Public and Private School Comparison," (2016), Fast Facts, National Center for Education Statistics, <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=55>.
- <sup>4</sup> Frank Newport (2012), "In U.S., 46% Hold Creationist View of Human Origins," GALLUP Politics, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/155003/Hold-Creationist-View-Human-Origins.aspx>.
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- <sup>6</sup> Lionel Ruby (1960), *Logic: An Introduction* (Chicago, IL: J.B. Lippincott), pp. 130-131.
- <sup>7</sup> "Fideism" (2015), Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fideism>.
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- <sup>9</sup> cf. Dave Miller, ed. (2017), *Does God Exist?* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- <sup>10</sup> cf. Jeff Miller (2017), *Science vs. Evolution* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.
- <sup>11</sup> cf. Kyle Butt (2007), *Behold! The Word of God* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- <sup>12</sup> cf. Dave Miller (2015), "3 Good Reasons to Believe the Bible Has Not Been Corrupted," *Reason & Revelation*, 35[8]:86-92.
- <sup>13</sup> cf. Eric Lyons (2003), *The Anvil Rings: Volume I* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- <sup>14</sup> Dave Miller (2015), *Why People Suffer* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- <sup>15</sup> cf. Kyle Butt (2010), *A Christian's Guide to Refuting Atheism* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- <sup>16</sup> cf. Kyle Butt and Eric Lyons (2006), *Behold! The Lamb of God* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).



[EDITOR'S NOTE: A.P. auxiliary staff writer Dr. Bryant holds degrees from Lipscomb University (B.A. in History, M.A. in Bible), Reformed Theological Seminary (M.A.), and a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies with an emphasis in Old Testament from Amridge University. He has done additional coursework in Biblical and Near Eastern Archaeology and Languages from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and participated in archaeological excavations at Tel El-Borg in Egypt. He holds professional memberships in the American Schools of Oriental Research, the Society of Biblical Literature, the Archaeological Institute of America, and the International Society of Christian Apologetics.]

**C**HARGES of plagiarism are quite common among critics of Christianity. Christians may hear claims that their faith rests on a religion entirely borrowed from older faiths and mythologies. Often described as a relative late-comer to the religious scene, Christianity is alleged to have borrowed from a wide array of mythological traditions. Upon closer examination of the facts, claims of this nature are often baseless and sometimes even fraudulent.

One of the so-called "savior gods" of the ancient world is the Hindu deity Krishna. Mythicists (those who believe Jesus is nothing more than a mythical figure like Zeus, Thor, Ba'al, etc.) claim the existence of unmistakable parallels between Krishna and Jesus

in the original sources. These parallels are so strong, they argue, that the only rational conclusion is that the Gospel writers recorded a tradition about Jesus that was deeply influenced by, or even plagiarized, Hindu beliefs.<sup>1</sup>

Although the description of similarities between the two persons sounds as if some connection exists, problems quickly begin to mount once readers consult the original texts. How well do these alleged parallels stand under closer scrutiny? Very poorly. Let us consider some of the most common claims found in sources from published books and articles to information on the Internet.

- "Christ is a form of the name Krishna." No etymological connection between "Krishna" and "Christ" actually exists. Christ (*christos*) is the Greek equivalent of *messiah* (Hebrew *mashiach*). Both mean, "anointed one." Krishna is an unrelated personal name, which derives from a Sanskrit term meaning "black, dark, dark-blue."<sup>2</sup>
- "Krishna was born of a virgin." This is a popular claim, sometimes made by atheists,<sup>3</sup> but also by those who profess to be Christian.<sup>4</sup> Hindu texts make it clear that his mother Devaki had already conceived seven other sons, the first six of whom were executed by the evil prince Kamsa after their births.<sup>5</sup> Matthew states that the chaste Mary fulfills an ancient prediction of the prophet Isaiah (Matthew 1:23; cf. Isaiah 7:14).



- “Both men were born in a manger.” Contrary to songs sung at Christmas-time, Jesus was not born in a manger, but rather was laid there after His birth (Luke 2:7). The Hindu text indicates that Krishna was born in a prison cell where Kamsa had imprisoned his sister Devaki and her husband Vasudeva when he learned that the couple’s eighth child (Krishna) was destined to kill him.<sup>6</sup>
- “Krishna was born on December 25, like Jesus.” Sources differ on the exact day of Krishna’s birth, which is often recognized as having occurred in the month of July. Hindus celebrate the birth of Krishna in the month of Bhadrapada (August/September). The Bible does not give a date for the birth of Jesus, which does not appear to have occurred at any time during the winter. Historian Andrew McGowan points out that the second-century author Clement of Alexandria identified several possible dates for the birth of Christ debated during his day, but December 25 is nowhere among his suggestions.<sup>7</sup> None of the earliest estimates indicates Christ was born in December.
- “Krishna died at age thirty.” Although Jesus died in his early thirties, Krishna lived a much longer life. Common estimates place Krishna’s age at death somewhere around 100 years. A 2004 article in the *Times of India* reported Hindu scholars calculated that Krishna died at the age of 125.<sup>8</sup>
- “Krishna died by crucifixion.” Crucifixion appears nowhere in the Hindu texts. Krishna died after a hunter named Jara shot him in the sole of his foot with a poisoned arrow after mistaking him for a deer.<sup>9</sup> Kersey Graves infamously claimed Krishna was crucified between two thieves, that darkness attended the event, and that he gives up the ghost and descends into hell,<sup>10</sup> details he—or a source he used—invented out of whole cloth.
- “Krishna resurrected after three days.” After his death, Krishna’s spirit appears almost immediately.<sup>11</sup> Being

liberated from his physical body—or abandoning it—his spirit returns to the realm of the divine. Hindu pilgrims today still visit Dehotsarga (literally, where Krishna “gave up his body”),<sup>12</sup> where they believe Krishna died. Jesus was buried in a newly cut rock tomb and later experienced a bodily resurrection that serves as a prototype for believers (1 Corinthians 15:20, 42-44). The Hindu view of Krishna’s death is much closer to Neo-Platonic philosophy than it is to Christianity.

A popular author who made similar claims to those above is the late Dorothy M. Murdock (also known by her pseudonym “Acharya S”). Her book *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled* includes a litany of supposed parallels between Christian and Hindu beliefs. Although her work is hailed by her uncritical supporters and other non-specialists as a work of unparalleled scholarship, scholars dismiss her work as the stuff of crass invention. When asked about the supposed crucifixion of Krishna, Dr. Edwin Bryant, professor of Hinduism at Rutgers University, stated, “That is absolute and complete non-sense. There is absolutely no mention anywhere which alludes to a crucifixion.”<sup>13</sup> Murdock also claims that a number of other Hindu gods were depicted as crucified. Bryant again responded, “There are absolutely no Indian gods portrayed as crucified.... If someone is going to go on the air and make statements about religious tradition, they should at least read a religion 101 course.”<sup>14</sup>

A common problem found in the work of militant critics is the failure to adequately understand the beliefs of the religions they oppose. Critics can be inexcusably careless in their descriptions, making ancient religions appear more similar than they really are. This is often done by describing non-Christian elements of other religions using Christian vocabulary, and then marveling at the similarities between the two. In some cases (especially authors from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early

20<sup>th</sup> centuries), these parallels were made using vague interpretations, supported by evidence which was poorly understood and likely fabricated.

Despite claims to the contrary, the story of Christ in no way plagiarizes the story of Krishna. To argue otherwise is to twist and distort the teachings of both Christianity and Hinduism.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See Dorothy Murdock (2004), *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled* (Kempston, IL: Adventures Unlimited Press), pp. 160-165.
- <sup>2</sup> Vaman Shivaram Apte (1957-1959), *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, <http://dsal.srv02.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.2:1:1423.apte>.
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- <sup>4</sup> See John Shelby Spong (1992), *Born of a Woman: A Bishop Rethinks the Virgin Birth and Treatment of Women by a Male-Dominated Church* (San Francisco, CA: Harper), p. 56.
- <sup>5</sup> *Vishnu Purana*, 4.15.
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- <sup>8</sup> “Lord Krishna Lived for 125 Years” (2004), *Times of India*, <http://timesofindia.india-times.com/india/Lord-Krishna-lived-for-125-years/articleshow/844211.cms>.
- <sup>9</sup> *Mahabharata*, 16:4; *Vishnu Purana*, 5.37.
- <sup>10</sup> Kersey Graves (1976), *The World’s Sixteen Crucified Saviors; or, Christianity Before Christ* (Boston, MA: Colby and Rich), pp. 229-230.
- <sup>11</sup> *Vishnu Purana*, 5.37.
- <sup>12</sup> Diana Eck (2012), *India: A Sacred Geography* (New York: Harmony Books), p. 381.
- <sup>13</sup> Mike Licona (2001), “A Refutation of Acharya S’s book, The Christ Conspiracy,” <http://www.risenjesus.com/a-refutation-of-acharya-ss-book-the-christ-conspiracy>.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*



## Bats Go Viral and Moses "Called" It

Kyle Butt, M.Div.

**B**ATS are the only mammals that can truly fly, but it turns out that they have other unique characteristics that separate them from most (if not all) other mammals. In a project headed by Dr. Peng Zhou, an international research team did extensive studies on bats. Bats are hosts to 100 different viruses, many of which are harmful or even lethal to humans.<sup>1</sup> The team wanted to discover how bats can carry so many, and such deadly, viruses without getting sick themselves.

Turns out that bats have a special ability. When humans or mammals encounter a virus or other disease causing agent, their bodies "turn on" an immune system response that begins to fight the danger. When no such dangers are present, the body "switches off" the system. The reason for this on-off switch is that when the immune system is on, it fights threats, but it also poses risks to the animal. Michelle Baker, a member of the team, stated, "In other mammalian species, having the immune response constantly switched on is dangerous—for example it's toxic to tissue and cells."<sup>2</sup> Bats, however, never seem to turn off their immune defense system. Even when no viruses or diseases threaten bats, they always have their immune response switched on. Baker noted that, in contrast to other mammalian immune responses that seem to harm their cells and tis-

sues, "the bat immune system operates in harmony" with its body.<sup>3</sup> What we see, then, is a mammal that can carry 100 viruses without getting sick, but that can easily transmit those viruses to other mammals and people.

These findings shed illuminating light on the biblical food regulations that Moses penned in approximately 1450 B.C. In Leviticus 11, Moses instructed the Israelites to avoid certain animals. He referred to those animals as "unclean" and told the Israelites to avoid contact with live unclean animals or with their dead carcasses. Leviticus 11:19 lists the bat as one of those unclean animals. Moses' instructions would have kept the Israelites from getting viruses transmitted by bats.<sup>4</sup> An in-depth look at the list of all unclean animals shows a remarkable knowledge<sup>5</sup> by the author for avoiding potentially toxic and dangerous food sources.<sup>6</sup> There is no way that Moses could have figured these things out himself. He must have been guided by an all-knowing, supernatural Being.

As we further explore the prohibition against eating or touching bats, a modern reader might wonder why even make such a law, because who wants to eat bats anyway? The fact is, however, bats have historically been "on the menu" in a number of countries. Lucy Maddox, writing for *Science*, penned an article in 2003 titled "Don't Eat the Bats,"<sup>7</sup> an instruction

that sounds remarkably like what Moses said more than 3,000 years before she wrote her article. Maddox reviewed the history of the Chamorro people who live on Guam. This group was known to have unusually high chances of falling prey to a neurodegenerative disorder that can be debilitating and fatal. One reason suggested for this fact was that Chamorro people eat the seeds from the cycad plant. These seeds are known to have the neurotoxin BMAA in them. By washing the seeds thoroughly, however, most of the toxin can be removed. So, researchers were still baffled by the high rates of the disorder.

Turns out that the Chamorro people like to eat "flying foxes," Guam's large fruit bat. The bats also enjoy eating the seeds of the cycad plant, but they, of course, do not wash them. Because of this, BMAA builds up in bat flesh. Researchers found toxin levels in bat flesh to be "hundreds of times higher than in cycad flour."<sup>8</sup> Avoiding eating and touching bats is a great idea. We did not know why until recently. Moses most likely did not have all the details either. But the fact that he included bats in his list of unclean animals provides yet another piece of evidence for the divine inspiration of the Bible.

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> "Bat 'Super Immunity' Could Help Protect People," *ScienceDaily*, CSIRO Australia, <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/02/160222155631.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> I have written about this in the book *Behold! The Word of God* (2007), Apologetics Press, [http://apologeticspress.org/pdfs/e-books\\_pdf/Behold%20the%20Word%20of%20God.pdf](http://apologeticspress.org/pdfs/e-books_pdf/Behold%20the%20Word%20of%20God.pdf), p. 124.

<sup>5</sup> Eric Lyons (2009), "Did the Bible Writers Commit Biological Blunders?" Apologetics Press, <https://www.apologeticspress.org/AllegedDiscrepancies.aspx?article=2731>.

<sup>6</sup> Butt, pp. 103-131.

<sup>7</sup> Lucy Maddox, "Don't Eat the Bats," *Science*, <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2003/08/dont-eat-bats>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.





**“I’m OFFENDED!”** “That is offensive to me!” “You must not do that, because it offends me!” You will often hear statements such as these on television, the radio, or any number of media outlets. Those who use these types of sentiments throw them down like a gauntlet, daring you to continue. It is as if the fact that they are offended should cause you to stop whatever it is you are saying or doing that offends them. Somehow, “I’m offended,” has become the verbal alarm that signals some sort of mistake or misstep on the part of the speaker.

The fact is, however, just because a person is offended is not necessarily a reason to stop saying or doing something. Jesus often offended people, but that did not stop Him from preaching and teaching the truth. When a person takes offense at something, it often says much more about the heart of the one who is offended than it does about the person who supposedly “caused” the offense.

On one occasion, after Jesus taught about how the Pharisees had abused God’s Word, His apostles came to him and said, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?” (Matthew 15:11). It is almost as if the apostles thought like many people today. They seemed to be indicating that, because Jesus had offended the Pharisees, He should stop teaching those ideas or change His message. Jesus, however, thought nothing of the sort. He knew that

His message offended the Pharisees because of the hardness of their hearts, not because of the way the message was delivered. Jesus understood that the hearts of the Pharisees needed changing, not His message or even the way He delivered it. He responded to His apostles by saying, “Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind” (Matthew 15:14). Surely we can agree that the Pharisees would have been further offended by Jesus’ follow up comments. Their offense, however, was misplaced. They were blind to the truth. They should not have been offended at Jesus’ message. Jesus’ message was the truth that God had sent to set them free (John 8:32).

Mark 6:1-6 tells about a time Jesus returned to His hometown of Nazareth. He went to the synagogue and preached the Word as He often did in other places. The townspeople who heard Him murmured, “Where did this man get these things?... Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” The text then states, “And they were offended at Him.” The fact that they were offended did not mean Jesus had done anything wrong. It did not mean that He should have taken a different approach to preaching in His hometown. It meant only that the hearts of the hearers were calloused, sinful, and refused to recognize God’s message when it was preached. Jesus never cowered to the “I’m offended so you must stop” tactic, and neither should we.

At one time Jesus preached to a great multitude of His disciples. Many of His own disciples did not understand the message and “murmured” about Jesus’ preaching (John 6:61). Jesus then asked them, “Does this offend you?” (John 6:61). Many in our day would say that if Jesus offended the crowd, He was sinning and should change His message, change His delivery style, or re-word His statement to be less offensive. Jesus, however, responded by saying, “What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?” (6:61). What was Jesus’ point? If the people were offended with Jesus’ message that He was the bread that came down from heaven, just think how they would react if they saw Jesus ascend back into heaven, which was what He planned to do in the near future (Luke 24:50-53).<sup>1</sup> Not only did He refuse to quit preaching or change His message, He added something to the message that the audience would have had more problems accepting! Obviously, Jesus did not feel the need to stop preaching or change His message because His audience was offended.

It is certainly true that Christians should let their speech “be with grace, seasoned with salt” (Colossians 4:6). It is also true that Christians should avoid unnecessary offense (Matthew 17:27; 1 Corinthians 8). The Gospel, however, is exclusive and offensive to many people. Those with dishonest, sinful hearts will always be offended at the simplicity and straightforwardness of Christ’s Truth. As Christians, we should follow the example of our Lord. We must never be bullied into silence or intimidated into changing our message simply because a person or group is offended at the truth.

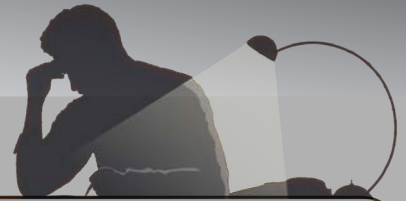
## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that when Stephen was martyred, he exclaimed that he saw Jesus in heaven “standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:56). This statement so offended the mob that “they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him” (Acts 7:57).





## NOTE FROM *The Editor*



### New Book for Young People: *Dinosaur Field Journal*



Apologetics Press has just released an unusual book that is unlike any other book we have ever published. Titled the *Dinosaur Field Journal*, the book has as its target audience third to sixth graders, although other ages will profit as well.

This is a “what if?” book. Specifically, this production postulates what it would be like for a man from ancient times (some 4,000 years ago) to record his zoological travel experiences. He comes into contact with dinosaurs and records his impressions in a field journal. Eber of the Land Between the Rivers is the fictitious character that records his thoughts, impressions, sketches, and descriptions of the dinosaurs he encounters on his worldwide adventures. This delightful piece of fantasy provides children with three helpful realizations: (1) up-to-date information about the size, shape, and habits of some 30 dinosaur and dinosaur-like creatures, including size comparison with humans, (2) vivid awareness that dinosaurs and humans co-habited the Earth, and (3) that the Creator is an awesome, all-powerful Being Who has left His imprint on His Creation.

Beautifully bound in faux leather with yellowed, weathered pages, the journal has the feel of vintage

age and authenticity that will undoubtedly excite children. In addition to sketches and factual information, the journal contains pages where Eber reflects on the “amazing armor” of dinosaurs, the inability of evolutionary theory to account for the existence of dinosaurs, the marvelous design of sauropod tails and the acoustically designed head of *Parasaurolophus*, the historicity of the Flood and its relation to dinosaurs, and dino digestion. Five and a half pages are included at the end for youngsters to make their own notes and drawings.

Written by Kyle Butt and illustrated by Jeremy Pate, we are unaware of anything like this book on the market. This volume is a unique and creative way to teach children about dinosaurs and their relationship with humans. The *Dinosaur Field Journal* has the potential to impact youthful minds permanently by instilling in them the truth about God’s animal creation and the outrageous falsehood of evolution. Don’t miss this opportunity to nurture the young minds in your sphere of influence.

**Dave Miller**

See Center Spread  
for More Details